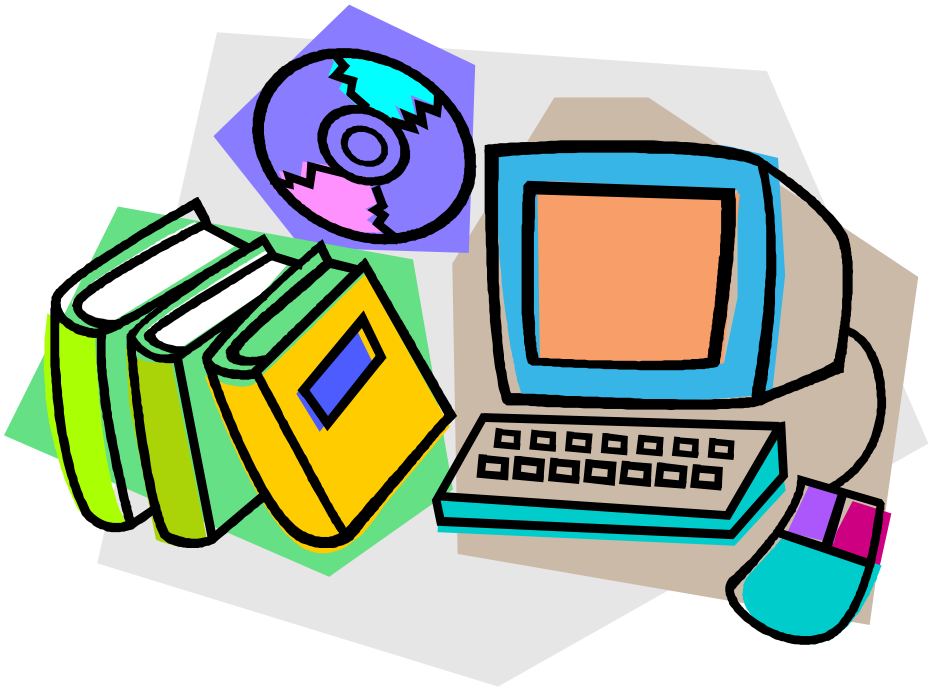
Teaching All Students

Staff Guide to Accommodations and Modifications



2006

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Accommodations and Modifications

Accommodations and modifications are types of adaptations that are made to the environment, curriculum, instruction, or assessment practices in order for students with disabilities to be successful learners and to actively participate with other students in the general education classroom and in school-wide activities.

Accommodations are changes in **how** a student accesses information and demonstrates learning. Accommodations do not substantially change the instructional level, content, or performance criteria. The changes are made in order to provide a student with equal access to learning and an equal opportunity to show what he or she knows and can do. Accommodations can include changes in the following:

- presentation of a lesson
- instructional strategies
- student response format and procedures
- time/scheduling
- environment
- equipment
- assignment structure-paper/pencil work

Modifications are changes in **what** a student is expected to learn. The changes are made to provide a student with opportunities to participate meaningfully and productively along with other students in classroom and school learning experiences. Modifications include changes in the following:

- instructional level
- content/curriculum
- performance criteria
- assignment structure-paper/pencil work

Hierarchy of Accommodations and Modifications

Layers based on their effect on the general curriculum

Layer 0 No Changes	All students do the same assignments.	No changes in grading criteria. It is the same for everyone.
Layer 1 Minimal Classroom Changes	All students do basically the same assignments, except some receive additional support or reinforcement. *(minimal accommodations)*	No changes in grading criteria. It is the same for everyone.
Layer 2 Classroom Changes	All students learn the same basic content, except with changes in how it is learned or tested. *(complex accommodations)*	Grading criteria may vary slightly.
Layer 3 Some Changes to Curriculum	Some students do reduced or similar assignments, but at a less frustrating level. *(accommodations and modifications)*	Grading criteria may be based on individual goals and class participation.
Layer 4 Significant Changes to Curriculum	Students do a smaller part of the general curriculum. *(significant accommodations and modifications)*	Grading criteria is based on individual goals and class participation.
Layer 5 Significant Changes to Curriculum	Students do alternate activities relating to the general curriculum. *(significant accommodations and modifications)*	Grading criteria is based on individual goals and class participation.

*Less than 10% of the special education students participating in general education classes need Layer 4 or 5 supports. **The majority of our special education students can be successful and master much of the general education curriculum with Layer 2 or 3 accommodations.**

Layers 1 and 2: Minimal Accommodations

Environment – Adapt the classroom environment so it makes learning possible for ALL students. Things you can try:

- Provide an orderly and predictable room
- Post VISUAL reminders of the rules and procedures
- Reduce clutter
- Be consistent
- Label key areas clearly – (Turn in papers here.)
- Seat target students away from major distractions like doorways, pencil sharpeners, other irritating students, etc.
- Use behavior cue cards and put them on target student's desk
- Allow for age appropriate and discrete sensory stimulation – stress balls, fidget toys, etc. These help minimize larger distractions like tipping back in seats, constantly getting out of seat, etc.
- Allow the use of earplugs or headphones (without input/hookups) to block out background noise during study time, test-taking, and classroom assignment time
- Always keep the Closed Captioning option ON when showing videos or TV segments so that all students can listen to and read the information.

Content Instruction – Accommodations in instruction and changes in instructional strategies can enhance learning for the entire class. Things you can try:

- Give at-risk students a very basic introduction to the subject immediately before starting the lesson for the whole class. Ask questions and direct discussions to elicit prior knowledge from the at-risk students.
- Include hands-on experiences and manipulatives whenever possible.
- Use experiments and other "being there" experiences to make the lesson memorable.
- Schedule field trips at the BEGINNING of the unit to give disadvantaged learners critical background experiences and information to benefit from the ensuing instruction.

- Continue to repeat and rephrase the major point(s) of the unit or lesson.
- Insert meanings of vocabulary continuously throughout the lesson. For example, in a geography lesson the teacher asks the question "What do the contour **(or curved)** lines on the map represent?" In a science lesson the teacher explains that mold often grows in places that are dark and moist **(or wet)**.
- During class participation, ask the target student a question about the main idea and state they have a minute to think about it or discuss it quietly with their (pre-selected) neighbor. Return to the student in a minute and re-ask the question. Allow for additional response time.
- Provide entertaining stories or fun mnemonics which support a point or help students remember vocabulary words or concepts.
- Partner students for activities. Allow for some groups of three so significantly challenged students can be easily included with two capable peers.
- Demonstrate how to use graphic organizers and then provide them so students learn how to categorize and organize information.
- Provide study guides for tests well in advance of the test.
- Offer copies of lecture notes to students who cannot copy accurately or quickly, have poor penmanship, or note-taking skills. Throughout the year help students fix their own notes using yours as a guide.

Layers 3, 4 and 5 -Increased Accommodations and Modifications

Assignment Structure-Paper/Pencil Work - Making workbooks, worksheets or other written assignments accessible to all students can be a challenge. It takes knowing both the students AND the material to be taught in order to make reasonable adjustments to written assignments. Simple ways to make accommodations and modifications to paper/pencil tasks can be accomplished by:

- highlighting with colored highlighters
- highlighting with removable highlighter tape
- marking text with Post-it® notes
- marking pages with Post-it® flags
- color coding pages, notes, and handouts
- using white out on parts of paper or to eliminate some multiple-choice answers

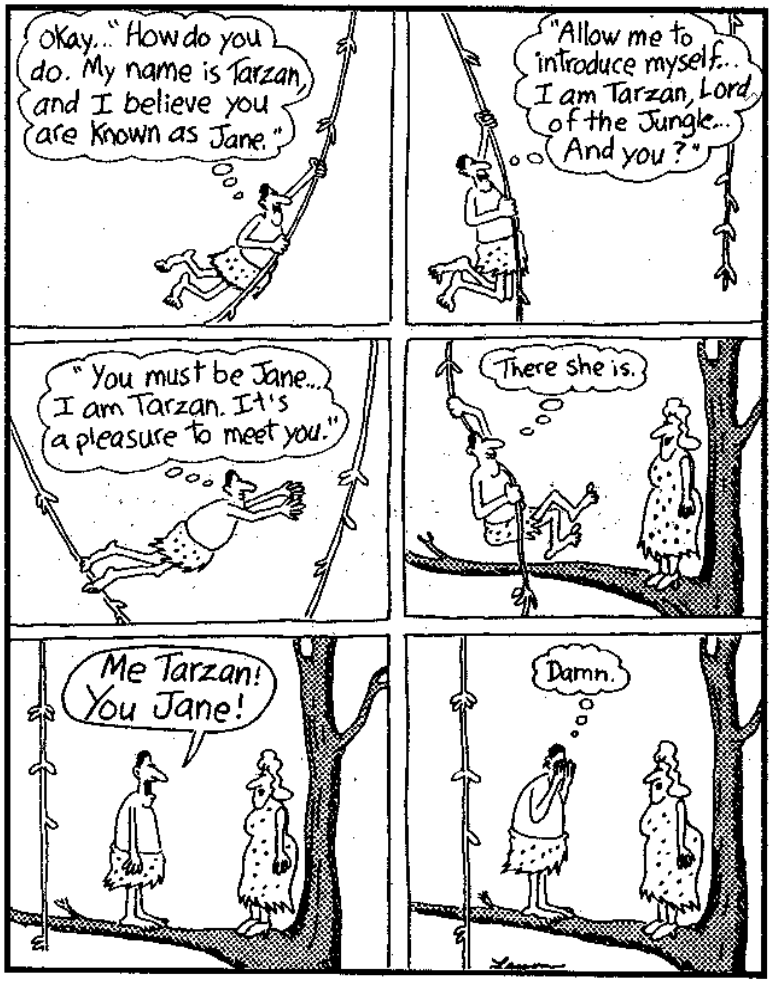
Content Instruction

- Reduce the variety of tasks (The class is practicing mixed addition and subtraction facts with flashcards; two students have addition-only cards.)
- Eliminate less critical information and facts from a copy of your notes (or those of a capable peer) using white out tape. Give it to struggling students to use as a study guide.
- Physically move closer to a struggling student before asking him/her a question. Teach this system to the student so he/she can mentally and emotionally prepare for answering questions. This reduces the stress, anxiety, and fear of being selected without warning.
- Find ways to involve students with significant disabilities in class jobs - passing out papers, collecting materials, taking roll, retrieving items from the office, etc.
- When asking questions that have several correct answers, select a disabled student first. He/she might only know one of the answers, whereas other students will know most or all of them.

Strategy Levels for Adapting Classroom Assignments (paper/pencil work)

The START program at Grand Valley State University compiled a system of academic accommodation and modification strategy levels. They range from **not modified (number 1)** to **most modified (number 5)**.

1. Open-ended question strategies (Usually not modified)
2. Visual organization strategies
3. Closed procedure strategies
4. Choice strategies
5. Yes/No strategies (Too modified for most students)



Knowing the answer and being able to articulate it clearly are two different things! Accommodations and modifications help students demonstrate what they DO know.

1. **Open-ended Question Strategies** – The open-ended questions are the **most difficult**. Many students have trouble with written language or have difficulty processing spoken language. They may not be able to answer open-ended questions in the curriculum even though they have some understanding of the content.

   Examples of **open-ended question strategies**:

   - Science – Describe at least 2 ways Mary can improve her experiment.
   - Social Studies – How are a globe and a dollhouse alike?
   - Math –There are 5 blue birds in a cage. There are 5 times as many green birds in another cage. How many green birds are there?
   - Language Arts – In a story, a character usually faces a problem. For example, a child named Connor wants a pet but is allergic to cat and dog hair. The ending of the story is important. Finish the story in a few sentences.

Open-ended Questions-No Modifications

UNDERSTANDING THE LESSON — MAP SKILLS HANDBOOK

Recalling Facts — LESSON 5 CONTENT MASTER

* Read each question and write the correct answer on the blank that follows. Use complete sentences.

1. How were the hours used by the Egyptians different from the hours we use today?
2. What do the abbreviations A.M. and P.M. stand for?
3. For what were the first clocks used?
4. How is the earth divided into time zones?
5. Why do many of the time zone boundaries not follow the meridians exactly?
6. In which time zone are the Atlantic coastal states?
7. Compare the total number of time zones in the United States with the number of time zones found in the former Soviet Union.
8. Why did the log of Magellan's voyage show the ship arriving in harbor on September 7, when they actually arrived on September 8?
9. If a ship traveling east arrived at the International Date Line on a Monday, what day would it be on the other side of the Date Line?
10. How is the scale on a time line different from the scale on a map?

Think and Write: Write a paragraph describing the 24-hour clock and where it is used. You may use the back of the sheet.

Use with textbook pages 28–35. 9

2. **Visual Organization Strategies** – Visual organization strategies make up the **second level** of accommodations and modifications. These strategies should provide students with a kick-start and provide an understanding of what the key information in the question is or what type of answer is expected. They assist the student in organizing the answer.

Examples of **visual organization strategies**:

- Science – Mary could improve her experiment by:
  1._____
  2._____
  3._____

- Social Studies – How are a globe and a dollhouse alike? A globe and dollhouse are alike because they both_____.

- Math –There are 5 blue birds in a cage. There are 5 times as many green birds in another cage. How many green birds are there?_____

- Language Arts – Connor wants a pet but is allergic to cat and dog hair.
  1. Connor should_____
  2. This way he_____
  3. In the end_____

Visual Organization Example

Name _____

CHAPTER 1 REVIEW

OUR COMMUNITIES

If you could plan a new community, what would you include? The table shows four types of places that you find in most communities. Under each type, write three places that you'd put in your new community.

PLACES IN MY NEW COMMUNITY

Places to live	Places to work	Places to learn	Places to play

Write true or false after each sentence.

1. You can only belong to one community. _____
2. Communities have rules to follow. _____
3. The United States is the world's biggest community. _____
4. Only adults have responsibilities. _____
5. Governments make laws in capital cities. _____

What's your favorite place in your community? Draw a picture of it on the back of this page.

USE WITH PAGES 8–15.

3. **Closed Strategies** – Closed strategies are the **third level** and make question-answering easier. Closed strategies narrow the depth of the curriculum and help the student understand its focus. They allow students to practice answering questions in a systematic format. Closed strategies can alleviate the anxiety the student feels from the overwhelming complexities of the curriculum.

Examples of **closed strategies**:

- Science – Mary needs to be sure all the pieces of cloth are_____
- Social Studies – A globe and dollhouse are alike because they are a _____of the real thing.
- Math –There are 5 blue birds in a cage. There are △5 times as many green birds in another cage. How many green birds are there?

  □ blue birds X △ = _____ green birds

- Language Arts – Connor is allergic to _____ and _____hair. A pet he might not be allergic to is a _____.

Closed Strategy Example

13. How are communities alike? Communities are made up of _____ that work and play together.

14. Is a sports team a community? yes NO
Is a law a community? yes NO

p.9 15. Describe "climate". Climate is the kind of _____ a place has over a long period of time.

4. **Choice Strategies** – Choice strategies provide the student with a visual method aiding recall. They can be made in varying levels of difficulty. Choice strategies can also be used with concrete objects. Teachers who already have multiple-choice tests/work developed for the class can narrow the number of choices to two or three for students with significant learning challenges.

Examples of **choice strategies**:

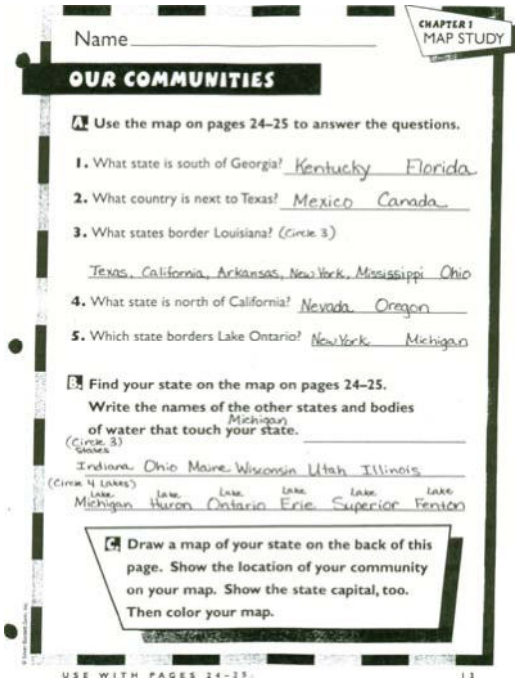
- Science – Circle one way Mary could improve her experiment.
  Pieces of cloth need to be the same size
  Use more clothing made by Girbau

- Social Studies – Circle 2 things that are alike because they are both models of the real thing.
  Globe State Dollhouse

- Math – 5 X 5 = _____
  20 25 30

- Language Arts – What might be two good pets for Connor?
  Bird Puppy Fish

Choice Strategy Example



Name _____

CHAPTER 1 MAP STUDY

OUR COMMUNITIES

Use the map on pages 24–25 to answer the questions.

1. What state is south of Georgia? Kentucky Florida
2. What country is next to Texas? Mexico Canada
3. What states border Louisiana? (Circle 3)
   Texas, California, Arkansas, New York, Mississippi Ohio
4. What state is north of California? Nevada Oregon
5. Which state borders Lake Ontario? New York Michigan

Find your state on the map on pages 24–25.
Write the names of the other states and bodies of water that touch your state.
Michigan
(Circle 3) States: Indiana Ohio Maine Wisconsin Utah Illinois
(Circle 4 Lakes): Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, Lake Superior, Lake Fenton

Draw a map of your state on the back of this page. Show the location of your community on your map. Show the state capital, too. Then color your map.

USE WITH PAGES 24–25. 11

5. **Yes/No Strategies** – Yes/No strategies are not appropriate for most special needs students. They should only be used in extreme situations when it has been determined that all other strategies are too difficult for the student. A Yes/No strategy must be systematically taught to a student. The person modifying the curriculum must consistently deliver the Yes/No strategy to the student. Once the student has made a Yes/No decision, the student must be held accountable for his actions in order to teach the meaning of Yes/No.

   Examples of **Yes/No strategies**:

   - Science – If Mary wanted to improve her experiment, she could make sure the pieces of cloth were the same size.
     Yes No
   - Social Studies – Are a globe and a dollhouse both models of the real thing?
     Yes No
   - Math – 5 X 5 = 20
     Yes No
   - Language Arts – Is a bird possibly a good pet for Connor?
     Yes No

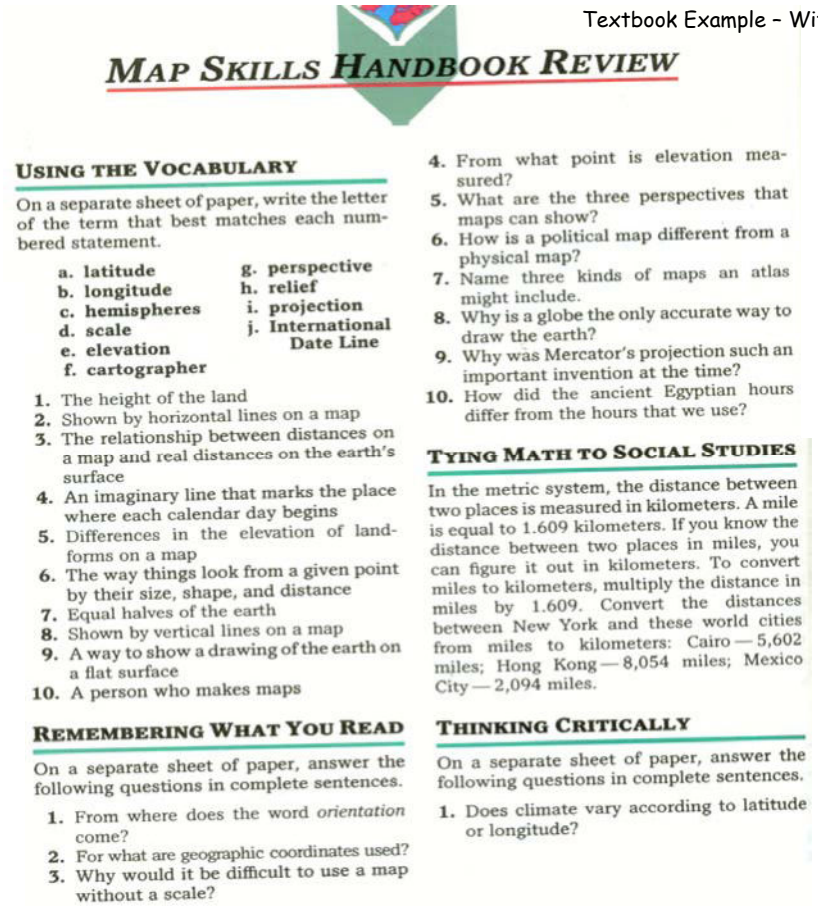
Worksheet/Textbook Sample Accommodations and Modifications

Sample from 6th Grade Social Studies Textbook

Most special education students will have trouble with the following assignment because of:

- difficulty copying information
- difficulty locating information/answers in textbook
- the amount of print – students instantly assume it is too hard to do
- low reading abilities - they feel defeated before they even try it
- an expectation of failure - they don't know how to achieve success

Textbook Example – Without Modifications



MAP SKILLS HANDBOOK REVIEW

USING THE VOCABULARY

On a separate sheet of paper, write the letter of the term that best matches each numbered statement.

a. latitude
b. longitude
c. hemispheres
d. scale
e. elevation
f. cartographer
g. perspective
h. relief
i. projection
j. International Date Line

1. The height of the land
2. Shown by horizontal lines on a map
3. The relationship between distances on a map and real distances on the earth's surface
4. An imaginary line that marks the place where each calendar day begins
5. Differences in the elevation of landforms on a map
6. The way things look from a given point by their size, shape, and distance
7. Equal halves of the earth
8. Shown by vertical lines on a map
9. A way to show a drawing of the earth on a flat surface
10. A person who makes maps

REMEMBERING WHAT YOU READ

On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. From where does the word *orientation* come?
2. For what are geographic coordinates used?
3. Why would it be difficult to use a map without a scale?
4. From what point is elevation measured?
5. What are the three perspectives that maps can show?
6. How is a political map different from a physical map?
7. Name three kinds of maps an atlas might include.
8. Why is a globe the only accurate way to draw the earth?
9. Why was Mercator's projection such an important invention at the time?
10. How did the ancient Egyptian hours differ from the hours that we use?

TYING MATH TO SOCIAL STUDIES

In the metric system, the distance between two places is measured in kilometers. A mile is equal to 1.609 kilometers. If you know the distance between two places in miles, you can figure it out in kilometers. To convert miles to kilometers, multiply the distance in miles by 1.609. Convert the distances between New York and these world cities from miles to kilometers: Cairo — 5,602 miles; Hong Kong — 8,054 miles; Mexico City — 2,094 miles.

THINKING CRITICALLY

On a separate sheet of paper, answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. Does climate vary according to latitude or longitude?

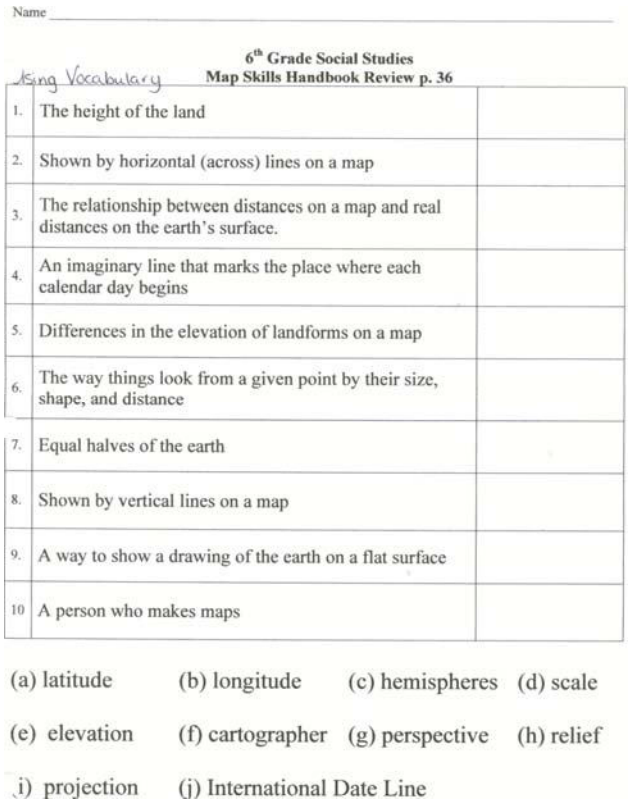
Ways to change this assignment

- **Reduce** the amount of required writing
- Give **page numbers** where answers are found
- Make it **meaningful** by highlighting what is on the test
- Use **visual organization strategies** to make assignment less overwhelming

Visual Organization Strategy

Using Vocabulary section-
Accommodation only

Exactly the same information is presented, but the content is visually organized in a table and the amount of writing required by the student is greatly reduced.



Name _____

6th Grade Social Studies
Using Vocabulary Map Skills Handbook Review p. 36

1.	The height of the land	
2.	Shown by horizontal (across) lines on a map	
3.	The relationship between distances on a map and real distances on the earth's surface.	
4.	An imaginary line that marks the place where each calendar day begins	
5.	Differences in the elevation of landforms on a map	
6.	The way things look from a given point by their size, shape, and distance	
7.	Equal halves of the earth	
8.	Shown by vertical lines on a map	
9.	A way to show a drawing of the earth on a flat surface	
10	A person who makes maps	

(a) latitude (b) longitude (c) hemispheres (d) scale

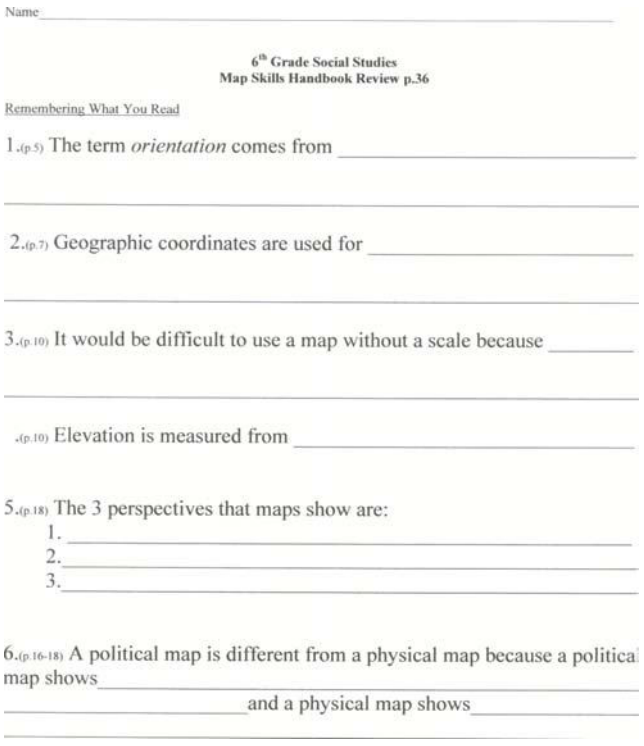
(e) elevation (f) cartographer (g) perspective (h) relief

(i) projection (j) International Date Line

Visual Organization Strategy

Remembering What You Read section-
Minimal Modification

The content is the same. Each question is visually separated from the others with answer lines. Page numbers are provided to aid the student in finding the needed information.



Name _____

6th Grade Social Studies
Map Skills Handbook Review p.36

Remembering What You Read

1.(p.5) The term *orientation* comes from _____

_____

2.(p.7) Geographic coordinates are used for _____

_____

3.(p.10) It would be difficult to use a map without a scale because _____

_____

.(p.10) Elevation is measured from _____

5.(p.18) The 3 perspectives that maps show are:
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

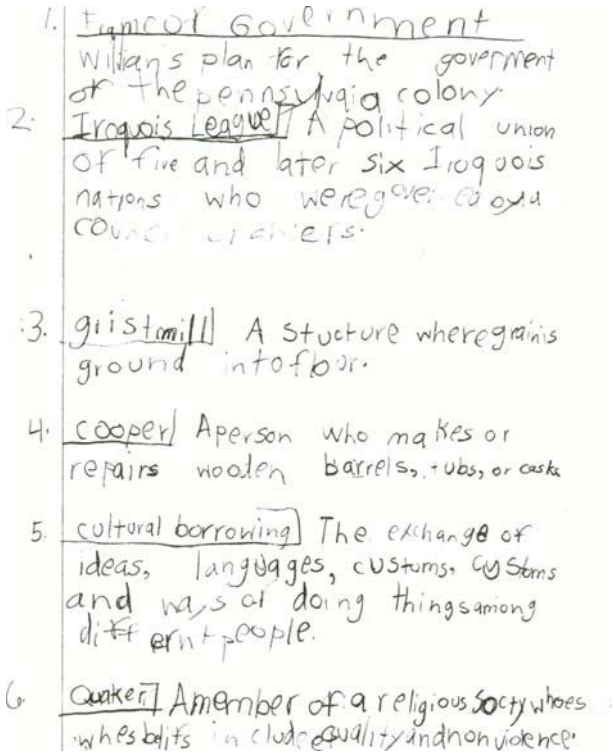
6.(p.16-18) A political map is different from a physical map because a politica
map shows _____
_____ and a physical map shows _____
_____

Choice Strategy

Unit vocabulary, 5th grade example

Chapter 7 Vocabulary Words
Social Studies

1.	William Penn's plan for the government of the Pennsylvania colony.	Frame of Government	tornado drill
2.	A political union of five and later six Iroquois nations who were governed by a council of chiefs.	recess	Iroquois League
3.	A structure where grain is ground into flour.	field	gristmill
4.	A person who makes or repairs wooden barrels, tubs, or casks.	cooper	Mr. K.
5.	The exchange of ideas, languages, customs and ways of doing things among different people.	cultural borrowing	singing
6.	A member of a religious society whose beliefs include equality and nonviolence.	Superman	Quaker
7.	A person who does not believe in fighting or going to war.	pacifist	dog
8.	A piece of wood with the letters of the alphabet, often protected by a thin layer of transparent horn.	hornbook	cat
9.	A narrow pass or valley between steep heights	gorge	Tim's backyard
10	A stream or river that flows into a larger one	puddle	tributary



In order to copy the words from the worksheet, the student used a large sticky note to help keep her place.

The following layer 4 accommodations and modifications were assigned to a significantly disabled student:

1. Find highlighted vocabulary words in the textbook with some help.
2. Circle the correct vocabulary words on the worksheet. (Someone checks paper for accuracy.)
3. Copy the words and definitions on separate lined paper.
4. Keep copies of all work in a notebook.
5. Use copies for study guides.

6th grade social studies assignment-no modifications

Many students would have difficulty with the following assignment because:

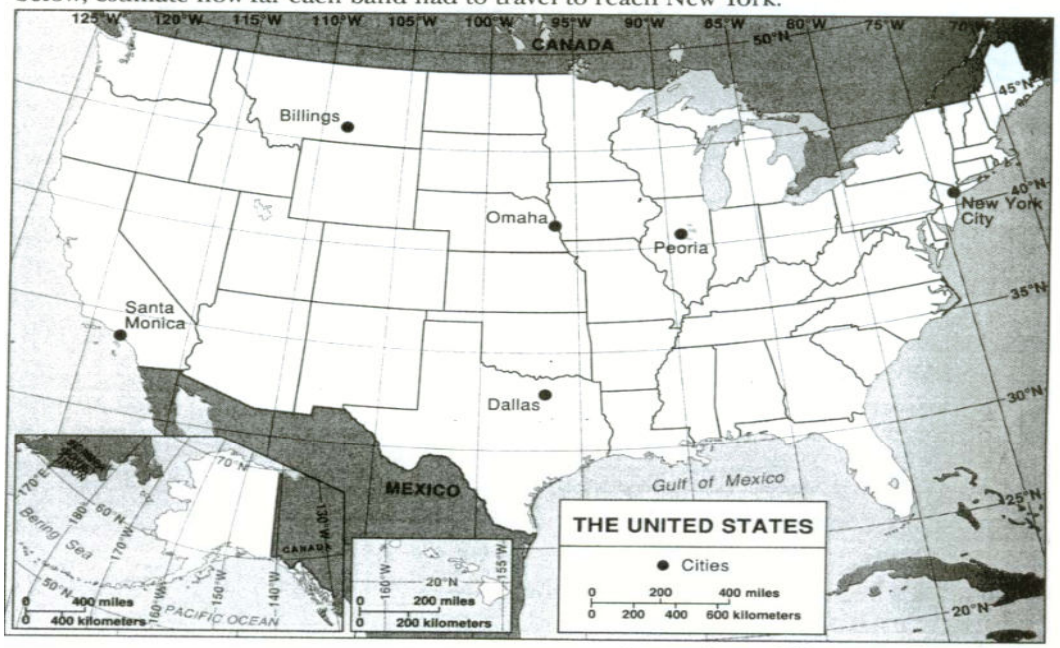
1. They are inaccurate when estimating.
2. The map scale is too small. Students will get kilometers and miles confused.
3. Students have trouble drawing straight lines.

NAME _____

FINDING DISTANCE ON A MAP

MAP SKILLS HANDBOOK

✻ School bands from different states traveled to New York City to march in the Thanksgiving Day parade. Using the distance scale on the map below, estimate how far each band had to travel to reach New York.



	Approximate Distance to New York	
	Miles	*Kilometers*
1. Omaha, Nebraska	_____	_____
2. Peoria, Illinois	_____	_____
3. Billings, Montana	_____	_____
4. Santa Monica, California	_____	_____
5. Dallas, Texas	_____	_____

Thinking Further: Why is it important to know the scale of a map before you use it?

_____

_____

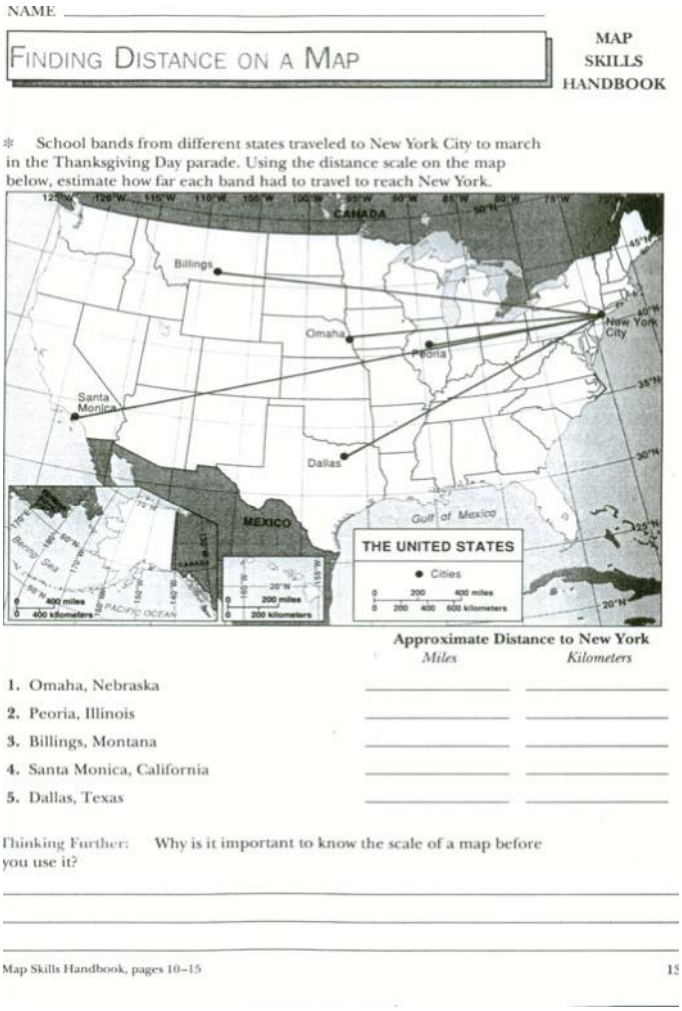
_____

Map Skills Handbook, pages 10–15

Ways to change this assignment

Visual Organization accommodations made to this assignment:

- lines are drawn on the map
- measuring card with a straight edge is given to students to use



NAME _____

FINDING DISTANCE ON A MAP

MAP SKILLS HANDBOOK

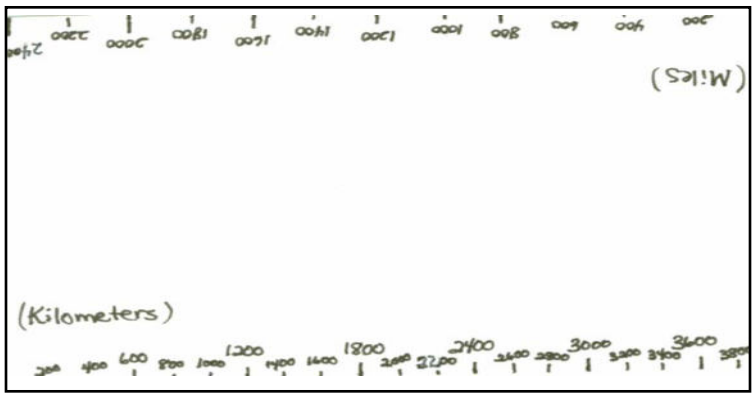
* School bands from different states traveled to New York City to march in the Thanksgiving Day parade. Using the distance scale on the map below, estimate how far each band had to travel to reach New York.

	Approximate Distance to New York	
	Miles	*Kilometers*
1. Omaha, Nebraska		
2. Peoria, Illinois		
3. Billings, Montana		
4. Santa Monica, California		
5. Dallas, Texas		

Thinking Further: Why is it important to know the scale of a map before you use it?

Map Skills Handbook, pages 10–15 15

A flat edge measuring card was made using an index card and the map scale.



Fine Motor/Penmanship Modifications/Accommodations

Delays in fine motor skills can make writing excruciating for disabled students. They frequently get frustrated and behavior issues ensue. Alleviating the frustration can result in a positive learning experience.

Low technology strategies to try:

- Use a triangle pencil grip for better control
- Use a weighted pencil
- Vary length and thickness of pencil
- Vary writing implement (crayons, colored pencils, fine markers)
- Put something textured (such as fine sand paper) under the paper
- Provide various sizes of wide-ruled paper, gradually decrease size
- Purchase raised-line paper
- Apply thin lines of glue over lines to make a raised edge when dry
- Use a straight edge for writing
- Skip every other line on paper
- Enlarge paper on copy machine to make fill-in blanks larger
- Use mounted scissors and paper holder for cutting
- Highlight or outline areas to be filled in
- Provide small mailing labels already typed with the student's name
- Reduce the amount of writing/pencil work required
- Allow additional time for writing
- Provide close-up model to copy from instead of board or overhead screen
- Indicate to parent when it is appropriate to write <u>for</u> the student
- Place alphabet strip on desk if student has difficulty forming letters

additional time

weighted pencil

pre-printed name labels

Medium technology strategies to try:

- Chair with sides for trunk support
- Slant board (writing on an easel stand)
- Label maker for taking spelling tests
- Recorder for giving oral answers that are later transcribed to paper
- Partner to take dictation (someone else writes as student talks)

clipboard with stand

digital recorder

High technology strategies to try:

- Word processor
- Digital notepad
- Computer with voice recognition capabilities

NEO AlphaSmart Portable Word Processor

Reading Modifications/Accommodations

The majority of students who receive special education services have difficulty in the area of reading. Since reading encompasses much of the school day, textbook modifications are critical if these students are to receive an appropriate education. Many teachers ask the question, "How can a student be included in a general education class, if the student is unable to read the textbook? " Replace that question with, **"How much material will the student be able to learn and/or understand when the information is presented in another manner?"**

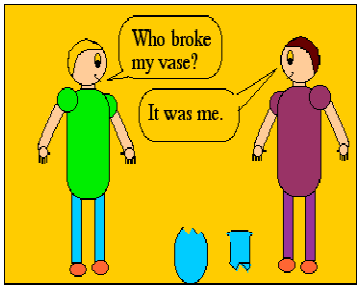
Inclusion, 450 Strategies for Success, by Peggy Hammeken

Low technology strategies to try:

- Don't assume the student can read cursive – **MANY special needs students (regardless of age) CANNOT read cursive writing**
- Read the text aloud to the class or to a small group
- Vary the groups so students with disabilities become familiar with the procedures of working in small groups and are exposed to many peers
- If a non-reader is included in the class, group him/her with your best oral reader(s)
- Divide the class into two groups if another adult is present to help
- Teacher, paraprofessional or adult volunteer reads to student
- Partner students so they can read aloud to each other
- Provide a note-taking format BEFORE beginning reading to guide comprehension
- Highlight key words and concepts
- Help student re-read key ideas and highlighted content
- Simplify complex text by rewording (break a complex sentence into several short sentences)
- Reduce the amount of reading required (Student reads the summary three times while the class reads the entire chapter.)
- Allow additional time to read
- Provide vocabulary lists with user-friendly definitions

colored strip - simple visual to help students keep their place as they read

- Substitute one-page summaries or study guides that identify key terms and ideas instead of the whole reading assignment
- Use Closed Captioning for all TV/video viewing so students see words and speech connected.
- Put main ideas on note cards and help students organize them
- Glue dots on page corners to make turning pages easier for very young students
- Provide colored/highlighted strips to assist students in following along in textbook
- Use bookmarks to help keep place
- Provide books on tape, videotapes, etc (free from book companies, libraries, and services to the visually impaired)
- Use large print text (enlarge on copier or books on loan from Visually Impaired programs)
- Add images that illustrate the content (i.e. Google Images)



Dictionary definition: in·teg·ri·ty (ĭn-tĕg'-rĭ-tē)
n.
1. Steadfast adherence to a strict moral or ethical code.
2. The state of being unimpaired; soundness.
3. The quality or condition of being whole or undivided; completeness.

Student Friendly definition: in-teg-ri-ty (in-teg-ru-tee)
n. doing what is right

High technology strategies to try:

- Online books
- Electronic books
- Text reader (Reading Pen, Scan and Read)
- Electronic dictionary

The Reading Pen scans and reads aloud words and sentences. It also provides definitions.

Computer programs can read aloud from websites, books on line, scanned worksheets, and more.

Writing Modifications/Accommodations

Many students have difficulty with written language for a variety of reasons. Some students have trouble generating ideas or transferring their ideas into written words. Other students do not understand grammar, syntax, or the mechanics of writing. Still others have difficulty processing language.

Generating Ideas:

- Teach writing each day; don't just assign it
- Give the student specific instructions-gradually decrease structure as confidence builds
- Allow student to use ideas from a word/idea bank
- Allow student to write about segments of the same topic for several days
- After a topic has been chosen, assist the student in developing a visual outline/graphic organizer
- Keep pictures available to help generate ideas
- Require a minimal amount of writing per day-gradually increase the expectations (Be prepared to start with very little!)
- Allow student to bring a picture from home to write about
- Allow lists and simple sentences-help student to gradually become more complex
- Allow students to dictate ideas to teacher, paraprofessional or volunteer
- Require/encourage student to copy material from the volunteer's dictation
- Provide a list of words for the student to use
- Provide a clearly written topic sentence and an informal outline to get the student started on a paragraph or essay

The Writing Process:

- Avoid corrections in the mechanical aspects in early stages of writing- concentrate on idea development
- Teach and require the use of graphic organizers/outlines/mapping skills to help students learn to visualize the parts of the paragraph/essay/story
- Teach importance of **beginning, middle** and **end** of stories
- Require students to incorporate transition words (ex. **first, next, then, last** or **most importantly, also of interest)** into paragraph writing
- Teach proofreading skills
- Allow use of checklist for proofreading
- Have the students read the story aloud to identify inaccurate construction of sentences
- Encourage students to share stories with the class or a partner - do not require disabled students to read their work to the class if they are uncomfortable (They learn from hearing good stories modeled for them.)
- Allow the use of a computer or word processor

- Value quality over quantity - look for a well-written paragraph instead of a longer story of mutilated sentences and atrocious spelling
- Allow fill-in-the-blank forms for the beginning stages of report writing
- Allow multiple formats for presentations, including some that don't include writing
- Allow reduced sources and modified format when writing research papers
- Allow disabled students to work together to generate one report
- Allow students to dictate stories, reports, etc. to volunteers/peers
- Require students to practice reading aloud the stories they dictated
- Develop a spelling dictionary for frequently misspelled words

Spelling Modifications/Accommodations

Spelling should be compatible with the student's reading level. For younger students or significantly disabled students who are not ready for a formal spelling program, students can practice letter formation, sound/symbol relationships and fine motor skills. As soon as the child is capable of remembering short sight words (is, the, a, etc.) or can blend two sounds (an, am, in, on, etc.), a formal spelling program can be implemented.

Pre-spelling activities:

- Create a spelling list of consonant sounds that coincide with the initial letter sounds of the class spelling list
- Student writes the beginning sound of word while the class writes the word
- Begin with simple sight words and short phonetic words as soon as the child knows enough letters and sounds
- Practice spelling student's own name and gradually add other familiar names to spell
- Develop a spelling list that also makes a sentence-"I am Meg."
- Allow lots of practice reading, tracing, writing, sequencing, stamping, building and finding spelling words and sentences

Spelling activities:

- Give student a **PRINTED** list of words to practice (**not cursive**)
- Reduce the number of spelling words on the list
- Allow student to set an individual spelling goal for number correct on test
- Gradually increase the number of required spelling words IF the student is making a mastery goal
- Group spelling words into word families or similar patterns
- Replace a few unfamiliar words with high frequency sight words
- Incorporate familiar words from student's basal reader or leveled books
- Chose spelling words relevant to curriculum and consistent with the child's vocabulary
- Teach students to isolate (say) each sound in the word and match them with the spelling for that sound:

through

sound:	/th/	/r/	/oo/ (as in pool)
Spelling:	th	r	ough

- Create a format that can be used with all students even though word lists vary
- Use the previous year's spelling lists
- Teach student to highlight base words, prefixes and suffixes in different colors
- Teach only one spelling rule at a time
- Combine spelling and handwriting goals to save time - **practice spelling words during handwriting practice**
- Allow spelling practice time each day
- Provide fun drill and practice exercises like bingo, hangman, word finds, etc.
- In addition to paper and pencil practice, encourage use of practice with white boards, paint, stamps, computer, orally in small groups, or on a tape recorder
- Provide audiocassette with words pronounced and spelled for student to listen to during extra class time or at home if appropriate
- Teach mnemonic devices to help spell difficult words (Wed - nes- day, the principal is your pal)
- Allow some choice for spelling practice methods
- Encourage student to verbalize sounds while writing spelling words

Marking affixes on spelling words and pairing with student friendly definitions:

prepare - to get ready

presume - to expect or assume with confidence

function - what something does

retention - holding something back

uncovered - shown, not covered

A label maker can be used to take a spelling test or to practice words

Mathematics Modifications/Accommodations

Students with disabilities frequently have difficulty with auditory and visual processing, along with delays in short term memory. Because math usually requires the use of multiple sequential steps in order to produce an answer, students get frustrated and confused. Students will need the use of concrete objects (manipulatives) and visual examples whenever possible.

Low and medium technology strategies to try:

- Introduce concepts using real life examples whenever possible
- Don't worry about perfect calculations when teaching a concept-focus on the process first
- Teach key math terms separately
- Provide student with an easy to read dictionary of required math terms
- Include drawings and examples to illustrate the meaning of terms
- When teaching abstract concepts, use drawings, diagrams, and visual demonstrations to establish a concrete relationship
- When demonstrating concepts use color coding to focus student attention
- Highlight similar math operations to help students focus on the operation (ex. multiplication in blue, division in green)
- Cluster similar problems into groups
- Teach fact families and build fluency with games and challenges
- Teach students to highlight each operation in mixed-operation worksheets
- Model math problems using manipulatives whenever possible (overhead manipulatives for math are readily available)
- When teaching number lines-use tape or draw a number line on the floor for students to walk on (This assists students with directionality too.)
- Enlarge worksheets/assignments on copier to give more writing space
- Put boxes around each problem to visually separate them
- Use manipulatives whenever possible (coins, counters, grouping rings)
- Allow use of number lines
- Allow use of a multiplication chart
- Use large graph paper to assist with proper alignment of columns of numbers
- Reduce the number of practice or test problems on a page
- Allow additional time to complete assignments
- Simplify and rephrase vocabulary in word problems
- Have students verbalize the process to you
- Turn lined paper vertically so the student has ready made columns
- Don't penalize students with fine motor difficulty by requiring them to copy problems-focus on the math operations and allow them to use copied sheets

- Create a math reference book that has easy to read information and illustrations of the concepts covered in class
- Challenge student to do just one line of problems at a time
- Use memory devices (Order of operations: "Please Excuse My Dear Aunt Sally" for Parentheses, Exponents, Multiplication, Division, Addition, Subtraction)
- Calculator
- Large-size calculator
- Simple-function calculator
- Calculator with print-out
- Coin-u-lator (calculator that performs operations with coin buttons)

Coin-u-lator

High technology strategies to try:

- Talking calculator
- Adapted measuring devices (talking ruler, clock, etc.)
- Computer with math software
- Wireless number pad for computer
- Speech recognition devices

talking tape measure

Content Area Modifications/Accommodations

Please refer to the other sections for basic modification and accommodation suggestions. Following are additional things you can try in content area classes such as science, history, or home economics to enhance learning and class participation:

Taking Notes:

- Give the student a copy of the class notes
- Give the student a partial outline to complete when taking notes
- Have another student make a copy of the notes
- Use a tape recorder
- Provide additional instruction on note taking
- Give student a copy of the notes before the lecture and have the student highlight key areas while the lecture is taking place
- At the end of class, allow students to compare the notes they took during class to your notes
- Turn on Closed Captioning if students will need to remember and/or take notes from a TV or video segment.

Completing Classroom Assignments:

- Provide page numbers to locate answers
- Keep questions in the order of reading material
- Reduce the volume of the assignment
- Highlight or underline answers
- Provide a word bank
- Break material into smaller parts
- Allow students to work with a responsible partner
- Take turns – you do a problem, the student does a problem
- If you use vocabulary word finds, provide a word bank
- If you use crossword puzzles, provide a word bank
- Make assignment more visually organized (refer to visual organization strategies)
- Provide multiple choice answers

Test Taking:

- Write test date in a highly visual place, repeat often prior to test day
- Allow student more time to take test
- Repeat and rephrase directions
- Review notes, worksheets, text and study guides
- Provide study guide well in advance of test
- Read the test aloud
- Allow oral answers
- Allow use of textbook, notes or study guide while test taking
- Provide vocabulary list or word bank
- Allow student to dictate essay answers to teacher, paraprofessional, or tape recorder
- Allow student to write on test instead of, or in addition to an answer sheet
- Provide a "second chance" grading option (fix answers for additional points)
- Add more white space to tests
- Use blanks to cue answers (number of blanks refers to number of correct answers)
- Break long lists of matching into more groups of short lists
- Delete irrelevant or repeated items (cross them out on the student's test)
- Allow breaks during testing
- Administer tests in quiet places
- Shorten tests
- Reduce multiple choice answer options using white-out tape
- Narrow the depth of the curriculum (if appropriate) and only test key vocabulary and key concepts

Reading Material:

- Allow student to have a second copy of the textbook to keep at home
- Read the textbook aloud
- Allow reading with a partner
- Provide textbook on audiotape or videotape
- Decrease the amount of required reading-find information in other forms
- Allow extra time for reading
- Provide large print textbook or larger print copies or notes
- Use lots of visuals to reinforce reading material-films, videotapes, computer programs
- Provide summaries or outlines that identify key terms and ideas
- Use a parallel textbook (same material, lower reading level)
- Pre-teach vocabulary, provide written summary of vocabulary and definitions
- Assist student to organize main ideas by using and organizing index cards

- Orally review important vocabulary frequently
- Activate student's prior knowledge and build on that
- Ask questions before, during and after selected readings
- Use lots of pictures and manipulatives

Keeping students on task:

- Reduce distractions
- Reinforce on-task behavior
- Provide shorten tasks
- Provide checklist of things to do
- Make sure student's work place is clear of unneeded materials
- Reduce the amount of required work
- Use peer helpers or peer tutors
- Vary activities often
- Keep student from distractions by special seating, study corrals, etc.
- Set a "beat the timer" goal for completion of smaller amounts of work

Keeping students interested:

- Tell stories that relate the lesson to real life
- Relate the lesson to things children that age experience
- Seat the student by the teacher-proximity effects interest
- Use cues to begin work
- Give work in smaller amounts
- Provide lots of encouragement
- Sequence work with easiest answers first
- Make sure student has all needed materials
- Make sure the student knows exactly what is expected
- Check on progress often throughout class time
- Give clear directions and repeat and rephrase them
- Allow directed peer discussion about the material
- Ask the special needs student to help another student when appropriate

Completing work on time:

- Reduce the length of the assignment
- Allow extra time to complete assignment
- Write schedule on board
- Write assignment and due date in a student planner
- Help student plan their use of time
- Break assignments up and have several due dates for the pieces
- Help the student keep a calendar
- Develop checklists
- Periodically remind the student of time
- Use a timer to define designated work times
- Reward student for getting work done in the designated time

visual timers help students to develop better time-management skills

Keeping students organized:

- Require an assignment notebook or planner
- Check the notebook/planner daily
- Have the student number the notebook pages
- Require the student to keep a notebook/folder for each subject
- Color code notebooks and folders by subject
- Color code pages/dividers in notebook by tests, study guides, etc.
- Have student immediately file papers in notebook before exiting room or moving on to another activity
- Allow student easy access to a hole punching device
- Assign a notebook buddy from the class (someone who has good organizational skills)
- Help student develop self-checking skills for remembering classroom supplies
- Use visuals to help student remember supplies (post on outside of classroom door, inside classroom, on student folders or in student locker)
- Print assignment neatly on board for student or helper to copy
- Require envelopes for projects with lots of pieces or parts
- Ask the student to tell you what materials will be needed
- Keep an extra set of materials in the room
- Resist the urge to penalize the student for being forgetful-instead consider alternate or creative ways to help the child remember
- Give reinforcement for bringing materials to class
- Develop non-verbal cues to help remind student to self-check for materials
- Use Post-it® notes to mark assignments in the textbook
- Write the assignment requirements on the Post-it® notes
- Break large assignments into smaller parts for the student and meet with student daily to provide feedback (essay due in 1 month: tomorrow 3 topic ideas due, pick one; end of week, informal outline due, provide guidance; next week introductory paragraph with topic sentence due, make sure it matches outline and give suggestions, etc.)

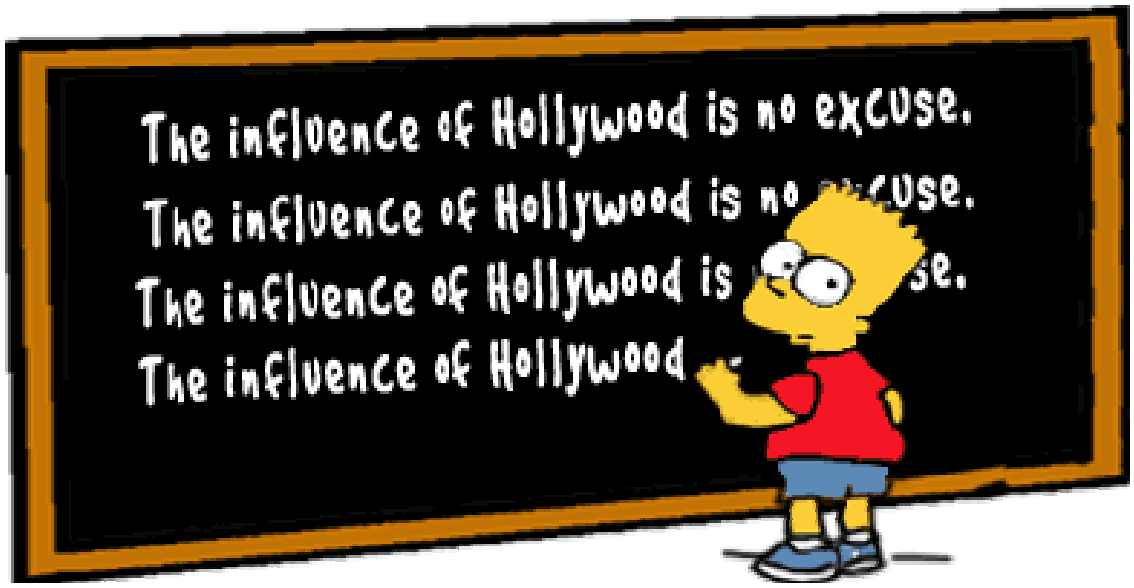
Behavior Modifications/Accommodations

Why do so many special needs students have behavior issues?

Most classroom behavior issues are the result of years of frustration, failure and the instinctive desire of "wanting to fit in with your peers". Instinct helps us hide larger issues of humiliation. It is more acceptable to appear like you're acting stupid on purpose. Other students think a "class clown" is funny. They don't think an academic failure is.

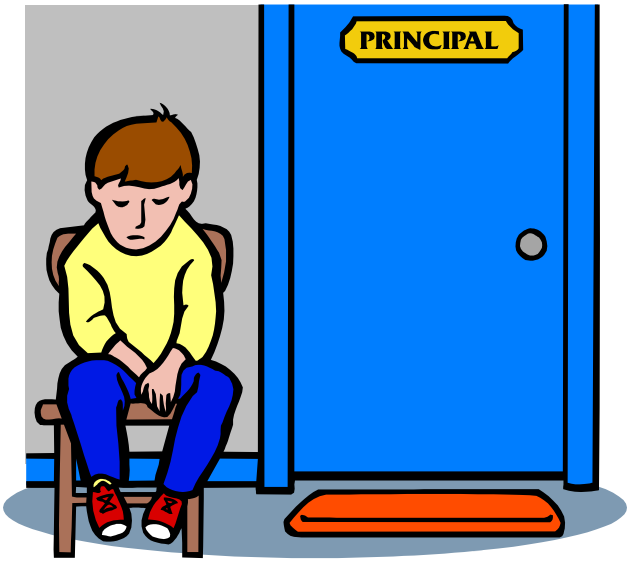
When are students most likely to be disruptive?

- Assume an in-service is about 50-60 minutes long. The presenter (teacher) gives you an assignment written in Chinese. The students in the class know how to read Chinese, except for you. Will you sit there quietly for an hour or will you get bored and start fidgeting or bugging your neighbor?
- You must go to an in-service that you have no interest in and you know (or think) the presenter doesn't like you or thinks you are stupid. What if you attend the in-service hoping to learn something new and the presenter never tells you how you will use the information he or she is teaching in your real-life job? How much attention will you give that presenter? How motivated are you to learn the content?



Strategies:

- It is important to get the **respect of everyone** in the classroom by giving it.
- Take time to get to know **all** students.
- Have a sense of humor, for your own sake and your students
- **Discreetly** let the special needs students know that you understand their learning difficulties and you are willing to help them be successful in the class.
- Provide modifications BEFORE disruptions occur.
- Don't take behavior situations personally. Don't show emotion or get drawn into conflict.
- Be sure classroom rules are posted and reviewed regularly so everyone understands them. Don't assume the special needs students know the rules. Remind them regularly.
- Be consistent. Hold everyone accountable to posted classroom rules.
- Don't accept refusal to do assignments. Provide reasonable modifications and insist on a completed assignment, even if it means the student works during lunch or after school.
- Don't be sarcastic. Sarcasm cuts very deeply. Remember that comprehension and attention are usually issues. Get used to giving directions multiple times and in multiple ways. Most students are not trying to deliberately annoy their teachers by not understanding the directions. THEY REALLY DON'T GET IT.
- Use VISUALS all the time, with auditory back-up. Most of us are visual learners. If we see something, we can internalize it faster. PRINT assignments and due dates in visible places. Repeat them orally multiple times. Add icons or pictures whenever possible.
- Develop a discrete hand signal to use with the student to indicate their need to modify behavior.
- For a student with frequent behavior issues, ask the IEP team to develop a behavior plan (can be done at any time of year, not just at the annual IEP meeting.)



Elementary Scheduling Problems?

Smaller school districts usually have GIGANTIC scheduling problems simply because of limited time and resources available to implement an ideal schedule. It is often impossible to align special education and general education schedules, especially at an elementary level. This means that special needs students **will** be in the general education classroom during subjects that are very difficult for them or that they will enter or leave a class in the middle of a lesson.

Keep in mind that students with disabilities need as much instruction as possible in order to make academic gains. Current research indicates that students who are receiving special education support for reading should NOT be removed from the general education classroom during reading instruction times, even though it is difficult for them.

Following are a few suggestions for times when special needs students enter the room in the middle or near the end of a lesson. The preference is to include students in the lesson whenever possible. (Refer to other sections of this document for additional ideas regarding making adaptations when students are scheduled for classes that are academically overwhelming.)

English • include them in the lesson • give them sentences to fix and copy • highlight all the –ed endings on a copied page • circle each word that has an –s added to the end • do a journal entry	**Spelling** • include them in the lesson • print 5 or more of the spelling words 3-5 times each • use computer to type out words • write words on white board • listen to recording of words being spelled
Math • include them in the lesson • give them a page of easier calculations to do • use calculator to do some problems • use manipulatives, charts, etc • do a fluency challenge • count/sort money • measure various items	**Reading** • group disabled students with higher reading groups so the story can be enjoyed and good reading strategies are modeled • rotate the group the special needs student joins • include borderline readers in with the group closest to their ability

- **Don't let students think they are not responsible for general education activities.**
- **Be sure ALL students have ALL textbooks-even if some can't read it or won't use it often.**

Grading with Accommodations and Modifications

Based on the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), a particular child may have certain accommodations and/or modifications that are required by law. (The IEP is a legally-binding document.) Other students, however, may not have this written into an IEP, but will need accommodations and modifications in order to get the most from instruction. **Grading is not changed or altered when you make an accommodation for a student**. Modifications which change the content or curriculum, can impact grading. The IEP is the place to clarify how a particular student will be graded, ranging from "same as others in class" to grading based primarily on "class attendance and participation".

Computerized Grading Programs

Most teachers have access to computerized grading software programs. Programs such as this make it relatively easy to incorporate modified assignments into an already established grading system.

- **Grade assignments on percentages**. Enter the percentage correct of each student's required amount of work. For instance, Joe is required to do 5 problems and he gets 4 correct or 80%. Amanda is required to do 10 problems and gets 7 correct or 70%.
- **Use the "excuse" option**. Most programs allow you to excuse a student from an assignment. The program will not count that assignment when totaling the grading percentages for that particular student.
- **Set up a separate modified class**. This option is a little more work to do, but does have some benefits. If you teach 6th grade social studies, set up your regular classes on the computer and add one more titled 6th Grade SS Modified Curriculum. Enter the students who need modifications in that class. Remember, NOT ALL special needs students will require significant modifications.

Report Cards

When modifying the general education curriculum, be sure to indicate that on the student's report card. Teachers in grades K-4 can write "modified curriculum" on the report card. Teachers in grades 5 and up can select the comment code that indicates modified curriculum.

Questions to ask yourself:

1. Is my main objective to teach ALL students in my classroom?
2. Do I want ALL students to learn some content from this class?
3. If a child has limited memory, what is MOST important for him/her to know?
4. Are my special needs students participating in state or federal assessment tests? **This answer is **YES**, for most special education students.
5. How will accommodations benefit not only the special needs students in my class, but other disadvantaged and at-risk students as well?

A Recipe for Success for ALL Students

Whose responsibility is it anyway?

1. Special educators should communicate with general educators PRIOR to the start of the school year. Special ed. teachers can share a summary of the IEP information, as well as the unique qualities and learning styles of the students. Most important is sharing the legal requirements for general education modifications and accommodations. **THIS IS CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION AND SHOULD BE CAREFULLY PROTECTED!!!**

2. General education teachers should assume ownership of the special needs students in their classroom. These children are part the classroom community the same as any other child in the class. Each teacher should explain and post learning and behavioral expectations and consequences for all students to reference.

3. Special educators should partner with general education teachers to help implement modifications and accommodations.

- Provide direction/help to modify assignments and tests/assist in reading assignments and tests/help implement behavioral supports
- Be available, helpful, and supportive of the general education teachers

4. When special education staff are helping to make accommodations and modifications to the curriculum for general education teachers, it is considerate to provide the materials needed (tests, assignments and answer keys) well in advance of due dates.

5. General education teachers (grades 4 and up) should take the time to talk with each special needs student ***individually, and in private*** during the first few days of school.

- Explain that you understand he/she has learning/reading difficulties and this class may be difficult for them.
- Explain how you will apply the IEP-required (or suggested) accommodations and modifications.
- Tell him/her that you are available to discuss any assignment that seems too difficult.
- Restate your academic and behavioral expectations for the student in simple terms.

6. Special educators and general educators should respect each other's additional responsibilities and help each other in any way possible. Modifications and accommodations are EVERYONE'S responsibility and they are REQUIRED as outlined in federal and state LAW *(Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 1997, Reauthorization of IDEA 2004 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973-Section 504)*

What are Disabilities?

A wide range of disabilities may affect the students in your classroom or school. The Internet can be a great source of information, but can also be a source of misinformation. In general, look for websites ending in .org and endorsed by specialist in the field. One excellent source of information is http://www.nichcy.org.

What is a Learning Disability?

A learning disability is a neurological disorder that affects one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language. The disability may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. A large percentage of the students with special needs have a learning disability.

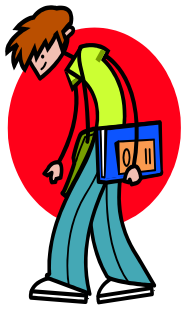
Every individual with a learning disability is unique and shows a different combination and degree of difficulties. A common characteristic among people with learning disabilities is uneven areas of ability, "a weakness within a sea of strengths." For instance, a child with dyslexia who struggles with reading, writing and spelling may be very capable in math and science.

Learning Disabilities Association of America

Individuals with learning disabilities (LD) have:

- Average to above average intelligence
- A significant delay in one or more areas of learning
- A gap between potential and actual achievement
- Gifts and talents in other areas such as mechanics, construction, sports, drama, etc.
- A lifelong disability that cannot be cured or fixed

LD should not be confused with learning problems related to:



- Mental retardation
- Vision or hearing defects (blind, deaf etc.)
- Motor handicaps (cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, paralysis, etc.)
- Attention disorders
- Autism
- Emotional disturbances (depression, bipolar, etc.)
- Environmental, cultural or economic disadvantages
- Abuse (drugs, alcohol, physical, sexual, mental, emotional)

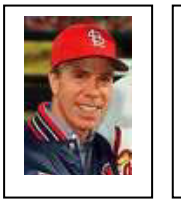
Any one of the above problems can occur in addition to a learning disability except mental retardation. Individuals with LD that have proper intervention and support can achieve success in school, work, relationships and the community. source: www.ldonline.org

Famous People with Learning Disabilities

The information below was obtained through interviews and stories from the website schwablearning.org.





Jay Leno – Comedian

Leno has a mild learning disability. He graduated from Emerson College in Boston, but getting into that college was difficult. According to Leno, "The admissions officer said I wasn't what they wanted. But I sat outside his office 12 hours a day until he said he'd let me in if I went to summer school."

Nelson Rockefeller – Former Vice President of the United States

Rockefeller had a learning disability that made reading difficult for him. He preferred to use big colorful charts instead of text when he worked on plans with his colleagues. He also had an amazing energy level.

Bruce Jenner – 1976 Gold Medallist in the Olympic Decathlon

Jenner had a learning disability. He often daydreamed in class and teachers labeled him as lazy. Because of his difficulties, he feared school, teachers and reading. His biggest fear was being called on to read in front of the class and looking stupid. As a result, he was nervous every day at school. A turning point in his life came about when his fifth grade teacher did a fun running activity with the students. Jenner had the fastest time in the whole school. That was the first time that he had accomplished anything at school. As a result, he gained some respect from others and he realized that he had a chance in life.

Whoopi Goldberg – Actress

"When I was a kid they didn't call it dyslexia. They called it... you know, you were slow, or you were retarded, or whatever." Goldberg learned to read with the help of a teacher who ran a specialized program.

William "Bill" Hewlett – Co-founder of Hewlett-Packard Company

Hewlett was very good at science in school but he had a hard time with the other subjects because of a learning disability. The learning disability forced Hewlett to memorize everything in school. As a result, he began to memorize information about anything and everything outside of school as well. One of his colleagues said that Hewlett was more knowledgeable than any other person that he had ever met.

Tommy Hilfiger – Fashion Designer

He said that he performed poorly in school and was perceived as stupid. He had to concentrate very hard in order to read left to right or his eyes would wander to the bottom of the page. To cover up for his inability to read, he became a class clown. Today, he still has problems with reading.

General H. Norman Swarzkopf - Commander, Operation Desert Storm

As a child, Swarzkopf often got comments on his report card that said he was capable of doing better work or that he was not working to his potential. His life changed when he went overseas and "was more interested in learning by seeing, and feeling, and hearing, and experiencing, and that sort of thing. I came back to the United States and was a straight A student from there on. I was never a bookworm, I was always interested more in being well-rounded, rather than being viewed as perhaps an egghead."

Princess Beatrice – Daughter of the Duke of York and Duchess of York

Princess Beatrice has Dyslexia and continues to receive extra help in literacy. Her mother admitted that she had a problem with reading as well when she was young.

What is a Cognitive Impairment?

Cognitive delays differ from learning disabilities in that all areas of development are affected. Cognitive impairments range from very mild (slow learners) to severe (dependent upon others for all care and support.) Students with such cognitive delays tend to need additional repetition to learn new skills and knowledge, but are capable of learning and participating in general education classes with accommodations and modifications. Students with cognitive impairments may also have other conditions such as attention deficit or speech disorders. For more information, go to: http://www.thearc.org/faqs/intromr.pdf or http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs8txt.htm.

What is an Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a lifelong developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life. The result of a neurological disorder that affects the functioning of the brain, ASD impacts the normal development of the brain in the areas of social interaction and communication skills. Children and adults with autism spectrum disorder typically have difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, and leisure or play activities. People with ASD range from extremely capable to significantly impaired, causing it to be known as a "spectrum disorder". Autism spectrum disorder affects an estimated 1 in 166 births (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2003). This means that as many as 1.5 million Americans today are believed to have some form of autism spectrum disorder. For more information, go to: http://www.hisd.k12.mi.us/specstuserv/disabilityinfo.html.

What are Physical or Sensory Challenges?

A wide range of other physical, sensory and or health impairments can impact student learning. Hearing and vision impairments, regardless of the cause, require staff to make accommodations and modifications to compensate for the sensory deficit. Health issues, such as epilepsy may interfere with education. Students with physical impairments such as paralysis, cerebral palsy, or loss of limb will have a wide range of abilities and needs for accommodations and modifications. For more information on hearing impairments, go to: http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs3txt.htm. For more about vision impairments: http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs13txt.htm. For other topics related to health or physical impairments and disabilities, search A to Z at http://www.nichcy.org/index.html.

What are Emotional Impairments?

Students with emotional impairments may look very typical but behave or interact with others differently. Some of the characteristics and behaviors seen in children who have emotional disturbances include:

- Hyperactivity (short attention span, impulsiveness);
- Aggression/self-injurious behavior (acting out, fighting);
- Withdrawal (failure to initiate interaction with others; retreat from exchanges of social interaction, excessive fear or anxiety);
- Immaturity (inappropriate crying, temper tantrums, poor coping skills); and
- Learning difficulties (academically performing below grade level).

Children with the most serious emotional disturbances may exhibit distorted thinking, excessive anxiety, bizarre motor acts, and abnormal mood swings. Some are identified as children who have a severe psychosis, bi-polar disorder, or schizophrenia.

Many children who do not have emotional disturbances may display some of these same behaviors at various times during their development. However, when children have an emotional disturbance, these behaviors continue over long periods of time. Their behavior thus signals that they are not coping with their environment or peers. For more information, go to: http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs5txt.htm.

What are Speech and Language Impairments?

Many students experience a delay in receptive (understanding language) and/or expressive (using language) communication. While some delays are easy to notice, such as a lisp, stuttering, or difficulty saying words clearly (articulation) other language delays are less obvious. Most critical for school performance is vocabulary development - all the words the student understands and can use. Vocabulary is highly predictive of school success. Go to: http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs11txt.htm for more information.

What is an Early Childhood Developmental Delay?

Children under the age of eight may be diagnosed with an Early Childhood Developmental Delay. This general category defines children with significant delays and is often used when the child is so young that a clear understanding of the child's disability does not exist.

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